**Yacht Clubs should do more - retaining junior sailors helps to sustain membership**

Organizations that sponsor round-the-buoys and distance racing can do more to retain Junior sailors. There is no reason why races cannot be configured to include more juniors. US Sailing can help by developing ideas for member clubs to incorporate in their programs. Concepts to explore might include: Club junior regatta as part of a regular season regatta, several races during the season that require competitors to include juniors aboard, cruising events that encourage junior participation, etc.

Competitors are often reluctant to include juniors because of the perceived negative effect on their score. Development of alternative scoring methods that encourage juniors inclusion on the crew would be beneficial.

Increasing the pool of junior sailors is another way of increasing the number who will adopt sailing as a lifelong sport. Although the Nyack Boat Club operates at a prime location for sailing, none of the local high schools have a sailing team! While funding is always an issue, it is important to establish programs within these schools to get kids on the water. We need to establish a set of inducements to get the schools, local yacht clubs and willing sponsors to work together to develop programs that will welcome these kids

Lastly, not all kids are competitive. Many may come to enjoy the sport without the pressure of racing. I imagine that very few skiers participate in racing, so why do we set up most programs to get kids into racing instead of simply enjoying sailing?

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At North Flathead Yacht Club in Somers, Montana we have a membership of 140, 30 of which are active racers. Our kids are now joining the club and enrolling their kids in the junior sailing program. Both of my kids are interested in sailing, although raising kids and the job make it difficult to find time and money to join a club and purchase a boat. I would say having a strong laser or Thistle program allows young people to enter the sport at a reasonable cost. Adults can do a lot to include kids and young couples in sailing, such as inviting them to crew, taking them out on cruises.

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Yacht clubs should own a fleet of a dozen of whatever one-design is most popular in their area. Those boats should be maintained by the yacht club and rented out to sailors at a small profit to the club. This would let young people have access to a competitive race boat and fleet without the costs and hassles of ownership. It would promote sailing in a very healthy way.

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YACHT CLUBS:

Return to race courses that provide tours -- short-distance racing, navigator classes.

Adjust races to fit the fleets that already exist: PHRF

Promote a few (not too many) short/medium distance racing in comfortable but competitive classes that will feed fewer longer distance races

Promote yacht club cruises with squadron run races between ports for comfortable/fun racing without the hype/costs/stress

US SAILING and YACHT CLUBS:

Make PHRF ratings transportable through reciprocity and compatibility

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Yacht clubs and adult sailors are both the key.

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Really it is a combination of yacht clubs and other organizations like fleets who need to do more to attract kids. The biggest flaw we have in our thinking is that we do not need racing to attract kids to sailing. We need just as much of an effort from clubs and fleets to attract kids who do not necessarily want to race. Sailing is a lifestyle/activity as much as it is a sport. Those who simply enjoy sailing will do just as much to support boat builders and marine suppliers - which serves us all well.

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Affordability and access to boats. If it's the cheap and easy fun thing it will get action. There are so many other easy distractions for kids. And with budget constraints how are parents able to afford it for their older kids and the young adults struggle to even live on their own and afford a car.

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US Sailing has become useless to the Offshore Community

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It's much easier to grow your membership from within than "buy" new members off the street who are new to the culture and lifestyle. Kids are our future, just like a tree in the garden. Each species requires a different set of nutrients and preferences for greatest success.

Yacht clubs and sailing programs need to realize that one size/program does not fit all.

We need a larger well rounded group of yachtsmen/yachtswomen coming from the junior ranks rather than a much smaller group of Olympic caliber racers.

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Having been involved with sailing for my entire life, age 53, I have seen the changes of "yachting" in my time, and now youth athletics, (sailing is part of this).

We have to encourage kids to follow a clear cut fit in or not, fit in pattern. Sail a 420 or FJ and that's it. Today's kids want something more, they want adventure, and excitement. (I wanted the same thing when I was of that age). The teens realize that most programs reflect teen - "day care". The kids are smart and are not interested in poorly planned programs by most clubs. the adults in charge are stuck in the 80's and 90's. They need to see what the world is doing today. Kite board regatta's, skiff programs, windsurfing, cats……foiling…that's what is cool and will not change.

Few if any Yacht clubs offer these choices. they are stuck in their time lapse, of these basic boats. Yacht clubs need to provide a path for all interests, not just these "two platforms" because it's easy to set up and it's easy. Club organizers need to do a better job of supporting youth sailing in all platforms. Find a path for the kids that do not fit in the standard program. Partner up with other clubs to create numbers, to find a path to support these interests. In the recent past, I have seen clubs ignore the youth, and focus on more social aspects. It's time for clubs around the nation to wake up, draw upon the membership to create a program that supports the needs of the paying audience ! US sailing has done an excellent job of identifying the challenge, vision 2024 is one path. We have more areas as well, match racing, keel boat one design, kiting, etc. Mentoring and club member involvement is lacking, stand up and make a difference, don't be so ignorant to say there are only two-three platforms to sail.

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Starting juniors in 2 or 3 person boats , not 1 person prams , works well for kids who are not competitive , are more social and don't want to be alone in a boat all afternoon.

This worked well for my daughter who would not have stayed with a program if she were in a 1 person boat.

She learned well from the older kids in the boat , stayed with the program and became an instructor in the progam .

Today, at 30, she charters in the Caribbean with her boyfriend and friends and sails our family daysailor when she has a chance.

She enjoys being on the water and sharing it with friends, she can and has raced as skipper and crew, but it's the social aspect of sailing that keeps her engaged with the sport.

I have been on a Junior advisory program committee for over 10 years (not at the club my daughter sailed in ) and there is little emphasis on the social aspects or seamanship.

Most of the committee is composed of adult members with kids in the program and they want the program to help their kids compete at a high level in good equipment so that becomes the focus of the committee. When their kids age out they are done .This creates a group of kids that are good dinghy racers but can't anchor a boat or tie it to a dock properly and lack basic boat handling skills that will give them the confidence to pursue the sport after they leave the program. It's no wonder they don't pursue it as adults

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More support needs to be given to community sailing from US Sailing. I also think Community Sailing and local yacht clubs need to have a link to introduce older kids to sailing on larger boats. How great would be if a local Yacht Club member could reach out to a community sailing or even a junior program when they need crew.

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My own experience: for thirty years: Lake Bomoseen, Vt. had a Lightning Fleet which raced there, traveled to other regattas and hosted invitationals there. The 7 mile long lake had no facility where one, who did not own lake property, could launch a Lightning. As a transplant from New Jersey's Monmouth Boat Club, I had fond memories of their 'junior sailing program'. With that in mind I started a fleet of smaller boats (Alcort's Flying Fish) , call them souped-up Sunfish; and sought to organize the hundreds of sunfish owners with cottages on the lake to put their boats in a weekend race that coincided with the lightning races. My thought was that the kids racing the smaller boats would 'graduate' into crewing and sailing Lightnings. That would have sustained the Lightning Fleet and, in time, add Lightnings and Sunfish to the lake. The Lightning Fleet opposed my request that their starting boat run a start for the smaller boats, five minutes after the Lightning start, opening that the smaller boats would "get in the way" of the Lightnings. Today Lightning racing has vanished from Lake Bomoseen and nothing has replaced them. It is up to adult sailors on every pond, lake, river and salt water venue to give some attention 'to the future' while they race to their personal victory.

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We need to do more at a grass roots level, ISAF has done more harm than good to the sport. We also need to look at the boats we are training our youth. The opti is great and there are tons of them, but my 8 year old got on a Bic this summer and all he can talk about is getting into a Bic and not an opti.

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Yacht Clubs need to do more but I also believe that the National Authority has an obligation to assist those clubs by continually promoting the sport beyond the "racers" to the general public. Unless you are "invited" in, the sport is not generally known to the general population and people don't know where to go to find out more about it. In addition, there is the presumption that one must be "rich" to partake and enjoy sailing. That element need to be eliminated and National promotion to the general public is one way to help to accomplish that. Not all clubs have huge budgets to advertise, promote and buy club fleets of boats. Many have limited resources beyond what is needed to just operate and maintain their clubs.

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Junior sailing is conducted in boats that are slow and irrelevant for the sport. We don't teach sailing in boats that are fun and represent present day technology and sailing. They are pre-computer era design and the world has evolved. Junior programs are more like a historic society show casing really old technology. The world all around us has moved on. We cannot be surprised that juniors don't continue and US is not competitive internationally when we don't teach kids and juniors to sail in boats that are relevant or exiting.

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Are we in sailing any different than most other sports?

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There needs to be a way to keep the cost/hassle of sailing low for post-college sailors. They are now saddled with a lot of student debt, often jobs that expect a large number of hours, and many other conflicting interests. Having a very inexpensive yacht club (or sailing club) option to keep the sailors engaged in the community, even while they may not have time right at that moment, would help keep them thinking about sailing when they get some more time, or a family (for a good activity).

I also think that, at least where I live, sailing has gotten pretty professional which makes entering at a young adult stage difficult. I see several one design classes working on recruiting....but mostly the high end sailors. In terms of the NSA, most kids/young adults think that it is pretty irrelevant....it would be helpful if the cost of the NSA for those less than 25 or 30 was lower, and once again came with a subscription to Sailing World (so they saw some immediate benefit).

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I think all three could be doing more.

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Take kids sailing and racing on bigger boats. Let them have some fun. Cruising is an excellent option and easier with young crew.

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Cost of ownership most significant barrier.

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Kids, no matter what the sport, need to want to do it.

If a child/teenager/adult does not want to do a sport then the best way to alienate that person is to force them to do it.

Some people do not know they are good at a sport until later in life but to have children driven to do sport by adults and/or organizations who are there for their own aggrandizement can only spell one thing....... no kids coming in at the bottom.

Enthusiastic parents, helpers and instructors work well and one to one mentors work well too but if a child is uncomfortable, in any way, with the sport they are participating in then good parent/instructors will spot this and either scale down that activity time or change the sport to something the child wants to do.

The other thing is that not all people want to take part in a sport in a competitive way.

There are many more people doing sport at the bottom end and enjoying it. They do not want to compete.

I ride a bike, drive a car, sail a boat and run a business.

The bike is because I like it.

The car is because I have to (I like it anyway).

The sailing is competitive (mostly).

The business is fun.

On that basis why not teach children how to have fun on the water.

It seems to me that most sailing club cadet weeks are geared around competition. It's not the right way to do it.

Those kids who want to to be competitive should be encouraged.

Those kids who do not want to be competitive should be encouraged too but in seamanship and boat handling. The competitive kids will have already ""got"" the boat handling thing very early on.

That's my take on it. Sorry if it's too long.

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All three need to happen. In my own local club, we have a very well attended youth sail camp every summer, but have a hard time retaining the kids once they age out. We are starting to work with local universities to develop sailing programs.

Make it fun!!!

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More adventure cruising on their own. Sail across the lake/ bay to an island on their own boat

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This fixation and angst about keeping kids sailing beyond their youth years is absolutely nuts. There are a zillion kids playing youth soccer, and I don't think there is any hand-wringing from any soccer association about how to keep them playing soccer as adults. If the kids want to keep sailing as adults, then fine. If they don't want to keep sailing as adults, then fine. This is only a problem (top down or otherwise) to people who have made a full time paying job out of promoting sailing.

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It's up to the older generations to find ways to include youth that appeal to youth. Most racing is organized at the club level, so the clubs need to take the lead.

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Assuming yacht clubs have any relevance beyond the bar and galley, they need to build their own futures by building keel boat sailing ranks. No real need to emphasize racing, since that is such a small part of the overall boating culture. We need young families to buy-in to the notion of a life-long involvement with sailing, with all that goes with it--sailing camps for the kids, weekend family cruises, perhaps youth sailing cruises with some adult chaperones to give the older kids a sense of independence, and ultimately, junior memberships in their yacht clubs where they will be able to shape the future of their clubs and build friendships which can endure.

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Tough choices. In Colorado, US Sailing is not much of presence, so not expecting any help here. The clubs are trying to do things with kids, but like many areas, leadership in the clubs is literally dying off or held by the older adults. There are very few younger families involved. The local community sailing program for youth does well, but we don't see kids in the adult fleets. The letter in the Scuttlebut the other day about having fun with non-traditional racing might carry a few more along in the sport. There is so much pressure on teens and young 20's for schooling and career, who has time to worry about complex recreation like sailing?

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Why are we assuming kids are sailing competitively? How about just sailing?

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I believe that Yacht Clubs should work to support local public recreational facilities with "Learn to Sail" programs.

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Our seasonal club in the Northeast, is in a rather remote resort area. As a result, we are all only there for about 10 weeks, and we're on vacation when we're there. There is very little local population to draw membership and sailors from. About half of our 250 member families are 4th & 5th generation legacy families that still are the lifeblood of our club. Our junior program graduates are doing quite a bit of college sailing, but then they go out into the real world to make their way - almost always at a distance. It's years before we can get them back to the region where the lake is accessible again. And during those years they are making their way with careers, marriages, and kids. It usually takes until the kids come along until we get them back for the junior program, and then they don't have the disposable income to purchase a one-design boat. Very difficult to get them back in a boat again. For us it's going to take a lot of club effort to make boats and opportunity accessible to our former junior sailors. So it's about both the club doing more and providing adult options - including some adult training for new adult members.

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I would like to see more opportunity for kid's from a variety of backgrounds to become familiar with the joys of sailing. It need not be a sport of the fortunate. Crewing for those that are racing or cruising for the day doesn't usually require more means than the will to do so.

Started sailing at a summer camp. While the boats were not in great shape (cat boats and snipes), the camp provided a winning formula with trained instructors, safe, fun and competitive events. The camp even allowed us to compete in local regattas.. After college, went on to crew on keel boats at a yacht club. In these days, I think local yacht clubs are key.

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WE have to make sailing fun, and something the kids want to do because their friends are doing it. Too much emphasis on winning, and not on pure enjoyment. Like any sport, few will become elite athletes. Get then fast boats to learn on. Fast is fun. Copy NZ and Australia

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Yacht Clubs need to teach children (and adults) how to sail in suitable stable boats, not in Opti's, 420's or 470's; these are not ideal boats to teach novices how to sail and/or how to handle a small boat safely. Racing should be an entirely separate program for those that have graduated from the learn to sail program and for those who wish to hone their skills while racing. As adults, I see parents (in all sports not just sailing) pushing their kids into areas where they never ventured or succeeded themselves. Basically these parents relive their childhood vicariously through their children. I suspect I have offended many.

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Provide small one-design keelboats for teenage sailors to sail and race with their friends, not just in Optis, C420s and Radials. They will be hooked fir life, especially after they go out to race adults and BEAT THEM on the race course!

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YCs need to understand their junior sailors are their future. It is there opportunity to grasp.

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Yacht Clubs should provide a pathway for juniors to proceed into adult sailing, whether it is via one-design or into WAGS (Beer Can Sailing) or Division yachts on a weekend.

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Here in the Midwest, we have been successful in providing crewing opportunities for youth and encouraging socials for them. We will also lend them our boats to sail in week day races. The social opportunities help us to keep the less competitive youth sailors. College sailing also helps them to stay in the race. Keeping low the cost of entry into the adult classes of boats is a major driver. These youths are making choices between cars, boats, and college costs.

We offer discounted entry fees to our regattas for those less than 25 years of age. I feel this helps for a few, but is not the driving factor.

As for our highly competitive racers, they find their own paths competing at national and international levels. We ensure that they are "not forgotten" by bringing attention to their out of area activities. They thus feel welcome when they return from international competitions.

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Local fleet leaders are the most influential in promoting participation. Make your fleet fun at home. Invite the youth to crew. Offer your boat for sale and buy a new boat - you increase your fleet size, convince your spouse it is a necessity, support the boat builder. Those who buy sails regularly should pass sails down to the youth. Give financial assistance by combining housing, double decker trailering to regattas. Just make your fleet FUN! All the youth will want to be there.

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Our club considers itself healthy when we have an active Junior Sailing program and an active Adult Sailing Education program and our membership increases from these programs. The families of Junior sailors need to be cultivated by the club into Family Memberships. Some graduates of the Adult Sailing program go on to become members of the club. We have club dinghies for Junior members and Adults to sail, including the Optis that the kids learn on, but we also have Lasers, Flying Juniors and a couple of Flying Scots. We also have keelboats owners and try to encourage volunteers to crew in races. We do what we can to reach across generations.

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Families that enjoy sailing together should encourage other families.

YC's need to join together and purchase fleets of boats such as the smaller of the "J" line of boats and make them available to use for free.

YC's need to have younger sailors have dues of no more than $10 monthly.

YC's need to promote having more big names in the sport giving clinics frequently! You already know the names.

YC's need to have youth social events that have nothing to do with sailing: field trips to sporting events, movies, beach barbeques, all for free.

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In our world there are two major discontinuities. The first happens at high school because another great local club seems to have that market sowed up. Then the kids go off to college, and we pretty much lose them at that point. So I think the challenge is not keeping juniors, but rather recruiting young families. We have good success with that. I'm a one design sailor, and the kids whip us anytime we loan them a boat.

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US SAiling won't do anything. It's primarily made up of "chiefs" who are angling for free rides to the next Olympics or ISAF meeting in some exotic venue.

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I'm 23. I sailed all the way through high school and college. But once I was done with college, I didn't really know how to step from dinghy to big boat sailing. I think if the yachts clubs did more to get young people to come and sail and learn how to sail bigger boats. I think we are more connected to our yachts clubs then to US Sailing.

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If I had to pick one it would be YC. They need to find ways integrate the youth sailors into their adult fleets. If they did that and made it fun for everyone and especially the youth - youth would continue the sport into their adult years and beyond.

Of course all three ideas would help but YC, and to a lesser extent one-design classes, are in a unique position to make this happen.

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My club, the San Francisco Yacht Club, has an outstanding youth program. The generous donation of time and money by many, many people has developed this into one of the best in the country. The range of options available to the kids, from exposure to sailing via Optis to extremely competitive racing in a wide range of boats, means that there's always a good place for entry and ways to step up. Members routinely recruit top juniors to crew on larger boats. The commitment from a few people at the local club level is the way to get something like this started...

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My son turned 17 last Friday and is looking forward to his second season in a 29er. He quickly got bored with the 420 and is hot and heavy to get into a 49er but luckily his coach's advice stuck and he will sail the skiff for another season. He is an adrenaline junkie and wants to go fast! Unsure if this is a common trait but it is his unique nature.

I guess what I am saying is that if they stay in a 420 too long you may lose them.

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Club fleets of high performance ( fast is fun ). Boats like 29er, bic open, and techno 293 windsurfing

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We lose the majority of "aged out sailors" hardly due to the boats they were sailing and more to the cost of belonging to a yacht club and the club's inability to understand that the time after college graduation is spent acquiring a job, paying back school loans (which cannot be deferred for the most part) and starting out in life. And in some cases a family. The adage of you build it and they will come is true; however, the only answer is you have to make it financially available. Suggestion: clubs need to budget for this group just as they would a ""junior program"" and be pro-active in the support of this endeavor.

Learning in the above mentioned boats in no way limits a sailor's ability to sail in other boats, if you can trim a main sail in a sabot or opti, you can trim a main of a 70'er. Keeping kids sailing; we live in a time where parents want their children to experience ""everything"" and will move their children to the next item on their check list. Keeping kids competing through to college is the most successful way, Remember, for most of the years this is a parent driven sport, driven to the club, driven to regattas, participating in their children's events.

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All sailing organizations should do more - sailing programs AND the National Sailing Authority. As a sport we overly focus on creating competitive junior racers rather than creating life-long passion for the sport. In all our educational programs we need to also offer fun, modern alternatives that inspire kids. Not just one track of racing boats designed more than 50 years ago.

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Membership should be very low cost for the 25-35 yr old crowd. Clubs need to provide boats and actively encourage the just out of college group to socialize around sailing.

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The effort has to be at the local level to be successful. One of the issues is the isolation of the kids programs with kids sailing just against kids. Clubs should encourage the kids to compete with the adults as a family. However there is one proviso, once the kids have a basic understanding of racing they need to get out of Dads boat as soon as possible especially if they show a desire to take the helm. You cannot expect a kid to take over the helm and have dad still on the boat. The roll reversal is often too much and undermines the family structure as to who is boss and who has to take orders even if dad is willing. It is very difficult for a kid to give his dad or mum orders.

One other point, the boats used in high school and college (420's FJ's ) are weight sensitive and too simple. They are a very useful stepping stone but the degree of sophistication is not providing a challenge for the more talented sailor to build his skills for the long term.

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Yacht Clubs and all sailing organizations should drastically reduce the cost to be part of their organizations in order to retain the young people that grew up there and encourage them to bring new friends to learn about and enjoy the sailing lifestyle- all parts of it- the competition, the opportunity to meet new friends and socialize in an activity they can participate in the rest of their lives.

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I think Nick Hayes laid out the problem statement and potential solutions pretty clearly in "Saving Sailing".

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Our Junior program is geared toward the final regatta of the season. There is no avenue for kids who simply want to mess around in boats. All have to compete or are left out. In addition, the starter boat is single handed which deprives the more social juniors of the interaction that a crewed boat has. It's no wonder these kids leave sailing.

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Perhaps community sailing programs are filling the void - they are growing nationwide because yachting is elitist and community sailing is fun and inclusive. The fundamental excitement of sailing is teach a kid to sail and you give them access to 2/3 of the planet. It’s a non-program program where success is using your brain, brawn, and resources to come back smiling. Jury-rigging and fishing are allowed and night sailing is part of the fun.

Cruising is not a structured activity. Meetings are called 'Rendezvous', 'Rallies', or perhaps 'Mess-abouts', not races. Inevitably there comes a day when the skipper wants to sail out to that distant island, or around the point. Reach around to the next-door cove for a picnic to see what you can see. Huck Finn casts off with Ratty and Mole to meet the Swallows and Amazons on Treasure Island.

Adventurers beware: the ocean is capable of providing more pain than man or machine can endure. It turns out you are unlikely to get seasick in a dinghy. Perhaps it’s the fresh air, or your mental engagement with running the boat and watching the horizon, but seasickness is very rare in dinghies. Some have said that if it is rough enough to be sick on a dinghy it you will be too scared and too busy to be sick.

Messing about in small boats does not depend on a new boat or the same boat as your neighbor. An older, pre-scratched boat that you made your own with a can of wax and some innovative “tie it and fly it” rigging is going to bring you at least as much fun as a spiffy new boat. A friend took a 20 year old Optimist with the “unsafe” airtanks and gave it a paint job that brought a smile to his daughters' faces and we all realized there was still some fun left in that old boat!

Dinghy cruising - whether adventuring or pottering - is a breath of fresh air in a competitive world, where day to day life is increasingly disconnected from the rhythms - and power - of nature.

From the Dinghy Cruising Association of the United Kingdom’s Website

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Encouraging children and young people to be part of a crew is imperative to keep them interested, skilled and adaptable to different sailing styles. My own club in UK offers a handicap incentive for each younger crew member on the boat. This encourages adults AND young people to share racing experience, and makes it the norm to have mixed age crews. We also have 'Family Fun Days' aimed at the younger children - it encourages families to get involved and not feel alienated from club involvement.

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Racing is taught a our club- yet the kids who end up moving from opti to 420 and laser and then out- can't tie a cleat, can't anchor a boat, can't dock and secure a vessel- and worst of all ... have no repair or maintenance skills. Sailing classes have become trials to weed out non racers.

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In Polpis Harbor, you can hear the sound of kids laughing as they sail in Optis and Hunters during Nantucket Community Sailing's classes. They are having a great time and developing a love of sailing and of spending time on the water. Nantucket Yacht Club (my club) and Great Harbor Yacht Club both work hard to provide good junior programs but NCS has found the most successful magic flute / pied piper formula.

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My suggestion would be to look for best practices looking at fleets, community programs, yacht club programs and individuals like Nantucket's Geoff Verney who makes a point of salting his Bermuda Race crew with young adults.

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Yacht Clubs should reach out to high schools but US sailing could set up good recommendations for how to do it. Not every kid wants to compete but would love to be out on the water as a part of a sailing club not a team.

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We need to focus on getting young adults to continue with all facets of sailing - not just racing

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US Sailing is not the USGA or USTA with millions of TV dollars to fund any initiative. It is a known fact in the sailing industry that 90% of sailboats sold never see a starting line. Additionally, youth sailing has too much emphasis on dinghy racing and not enough time spent introducing young sailors to all the other options in the sport of sailing. Start by broadening the curriculum and expose young sailors to windsurfers, keel boats, three person boats, cruising yachts, offshore racing sailboats, with spinnakers. Teach basic navigation and seamanship. Encourage the kids to try the different types of sailing. Then provide them with access to the boat other than Optimists, Laser and 420s. If they want to stay in the racing program after they have tried the other options, great! The sport will retain more sailors

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US Sailing provides a kit/template for getting kids out on larger boats. (see the US Sailing website for Junior Big Boat Sailing) Several programs, from Storm Trysail to Black Rock YC to Annapolis, have proven that getting teens on bigger boats provides a sizable increase in the youth who make the hard transition from child sailors to adult sailors. The keys are: size and power of the bigger boat is attractive to teens, a social environment that allows them to sail with several friends which is a key for teens, complexity is also very attractive for teens. Big boats are also great platforms for exploration beyond an afternoon. Finally, they are great to mix teens with some of their adult idols at the local scene. However, it does require a commitment from adults with boats to loan those boats to the program and provide a bit of personal time to share with the kids.

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Close behind are the classes doing more to involve kids in multi-age sailing. Big boat fleets can do a good job by taking some age-appropriate junior sailors along with the experienced guys.

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I think yacht clubs and adults need to be doing more. They need to work on introducing youth to big boat sailing. Here they can learn more about teamwork and the social side of sailing. It will help the youth learn more communication skills and develop relationships with adults. These adults could become mentors and a great resource for them in the future. It is a win win for everyone. Owners just need to invite youth sailors into their crews.

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Being in the Caribbean we have a big adult fleet in Melges, but our children sail optimist and then decide they are too big at 12 or find it boring before the have the opportunity to get really good. I really feel that children should be encouraged to sail and race but should also be offered the opportunity to cruise and sail for the sake of sailing. Or at least the option of not racing dinghies. I am an avid racer and also a sailing instructor and only today I had a race on a first 30 with 6 youngsters 3 of whom had said they were done with racing. After today we have a new team to race the local and major regattas of the region

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I am a 13 year old sailor working to get bronze 4 and am finding it really hard. I would love to see a more help from local club

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It's really all three but let's start there